UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DARRELL MITCHELL,

Plaintiff,

v.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 13-cv-03765-JD

ORDER OF SERVICE

Plaintiff, a state prisoner, proceeds with a pro se civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Plaintiff's original complaint was dismissed with leave to amend and he has filed an amended complaint.

DISCUSSION

I. STANDARD OF REVIEW

Federal courts must engage in a preliminary screening of cases in which prisoners seek redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). In its review, the Court must identify any cognizable claims, and dismiss any claims which are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. *Id*. at 1915A(b)(1),(2). Pro se pleadings must be liberally construed. *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep't*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990).

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) requires only "a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." Although a complaint "does not need detailed factual allegations, . . . a plaintiff's obligation to provide the 'grounds' of his 'entitle[ment] to relief' requires more than labels and conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a

cause of action will not do. . . . Factual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level." *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (citations omitted). A complaint must proffer "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Id*. at 570. The United States Supreme Court has explained the "plausible on its face" standard of *Twombly*: "While legal conclusions can provide the framework of a complaint, they must be supported by factual allegations. When there are well-pleaded factual allegations, a court should assume their veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009).

To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) the alleged deprivation was committed by a person acting under the color of state law. *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988).

II. LEGAL CLAIMS

Plaintiff alleges that defendants were deliberately indifferent to his serious medical needs. Deliberate indifference to serious medical needs violates the Eighth Amendment's proscription against cruel and unusual punishment. *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976); *McGuckin v. Smith*, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059 (9th Cir. 1992), *overruled on other grounds, WMX Technologies, Inc. v. Miller*, 104 F.3d 1133, 1136 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc). A determination of "deliberate indifference" involves an examination of two elements: the seriousness of the prisoner's medical need and the nature of the defendant's response to that need. *Id.* at 1059.

A serious medical need exists if the failure to treat a prisoner's condition could result in further significant injury or the "unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain." *Id.* The existence of an injury that a reasonable doctor or patient would find important and worthy of comment or treatment, the presence of a medical condition that significantly affects an individual's daily activities, or the existence of chronic and substantial pain are examples of indications that a prisoner has a serious need for medical treatment. *Id.* at 1059-60.

A prison official is deliberately indifferent if he or she knows that a prisoner faces a substantial risk of serious harm and disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable steps to abate it. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994). The prison official must not only "be aware of

facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists," but also "must also draw the inference." *Id.* If a prison official should have been aware of the risk, but did not actually know, the official has not violated the Eighth Amendment, no matter how severe the risk. *Gibson v. County of Washoe*, 290 F.3d 1175, 1188 (9th Cir. 2002). "A difference of opinion between a prisoner-patient and prison medical authorities regarding treatment does not give rise to a § 1983 claim." *Franklin v. Oregon*, 662 F.2d 1337, 1344 (9th Cir. 1981). In addition "mere delay of surgery, without more, is insufficient to state a claim of deliberate medical indifference.... [Prisoner] would have no claim for deliberate medical indifference unless the denial was harmful." *Shapely v. Nevada Bd. Of State Prison Comm'rs*, 766 F.2d 404, 407 (9th Cir. 1985).

Plaintiff arrived at San Quentin State Prison on November 6, 2008, at which time he noted discomfort in his right ear. On November 7, 2008, he was prescribed ear drops. On November 22, 2008, two days after he began experiencing severe pain and hearing loss, plaintiff saw a nurse, who examined him and scheduled an appointment. On November 25, 2008, plaintiff was examined and prescribed medications by a doctor.

On December 6, 2008, plaintiff was seen by a doctor and provided additional medication. On December 16, 2008, plaintiff was seen by a doctor and referred to University of California San Francisco (UCSF) as soon as practicable. On December 17 and 28, 2008, plaintiff filled out health care request forms for ear pain and because the medication was making him sick. On December 30, he was seen by a nurse who stopped the medication and rescheduled an ear treatment appointment for January 7, 2009. A doctor said that plaintiff needed surgery on the right ear. Plaintiff was transferred to Lake County Jail before that occurred.

At Lake County Jail, plaintiff made officials aware of his ear problem and the need for treatment. Plaintiff states that a defendant from San Quentin told Lake County Jail not to treat plaintiff as he would be treated when he returned to the prison. Plaintiff remained at Lake County Jail for almost nine months, i.e., from January 22, 2009 until October 15, 2009, without treatment for his right ear.

On October 15, 2009, plaintiff was returned to San Quentin, at which point his ear was worse and was infected. On April 20, 2010, plaintiff had an ear, nose and throat consultation at UCSF for otorrhea (i.e., discharge from the ear) and infection. A doctor noted purulent drainage within the ear canal. The ear canal was then cleaned. Plaintiff was prescribed medication, irrigation treatment, and a follow-up in three weeks. Plaintiff was returned to San Quentin.

On April 22, 2010, plaintiff had a follow-up visit with a doctor and another visit on June 1, 2010. He was told not to use a sodium borate acid wash that had been recommended for his ear problem. It was determined that there might not be a need for plaintiff to return to UCSF.

In a July 1, 2010 visit, plaintiff was found once again to have drainage from his ear. Plaintiff's scheduled appointment for a hearing aid fitting was cancelled due to an active infection and inflammation. On July 20, 2010, plaintiff returned to UCSF for a follow-up visit. The doctor recommended medication and a follow-up in three weeks. On August 10, 2010, he was seen again at UCSF and found to have periodic drainage and some granular areas, although the drainage situation had improved.

On September 17, 2010, plaintiff had a chronic care follow up and expressed concern that he was having drainage from his ear and sometimes felt a tickling sensation inside his ear, although he was using his ear medication daily as directed.

On January 11, 2011, plaintiff met with medical staff and noted that he was still having ear discharge and had not had his follow-up appointment with UCSF or ENT. He was then scheduled for follow up appointments. Based on plaintiff's persistent ear problems for several years and the lack of any treatment for certain periods of time, these allegations are sufficient to proceed against defendants Dr. Clark, Dr. Pachnski and Dr. Hall who treated plaintiff.

CONCLUSION

1. The clerk shall issue a summons and the United States Marshal shall serve, without prepayment of fees, copies of the amended complaint with attachments and copies of this order on the following defendants: Dr. Jackie Clark, Dr. Alison Pachnski, and Dr. W. Hall at San Quentin State Prison.

2. In order to expedite the resolution of this case, the court orders as follows:

a. No later than sixty days from the date of service, defendant shall file a motion for summary judgment or other dispositive motion. The motion shall be supported by adequate factual documentation and shall conform in all respects to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56, and shall include as exhibits all records and incident reports stemming from the events at issue. If defendant is of the opinion that this case cannot be resolved by summary judgment, he shall so inform the court prior to the date his summary judgment motion is due. All papers filed with the court shall be promptly served on the plaintiff.

b. At the time the dispositive motion is served, defendant shall also serve, on a separate paper, the appropriate notice or notices required by *Rand v. Rowland*, 154 F.3d 952, 953-954 (9th Cir. 1998) (en banc), and *Wyatt v. Terhune*, 315 F.3d 1108, 1120 n. 4 (9th Cir. 2003). *See Woods v. Carey*, 684 F.3d 934, 940-941 (9th Cir. 2012) (*Rand* and *Wyatt* notices must be given at the time motion for summary judgment or motion to dismiss for nonexhaustion is filed, not earlier); *Rand* at 960 (separate paper requirement).

c. Plaintiff's opposition to the dispositive motion, if any, shall be filed with the court and served upon defendant no later than thirty days from the date the motion was served upon him. Plaintiff must read the attached page headed "NOTICE -- WARNING," which is provided to him pursuant to *Rand v. Rowland*, 154 F.3d 952, 953-954 (9th Cir. 1998) (en banc), and *Klingele v. Eikenberry*, 849 F.2d 409, 411-12 (9th Cir. 1988).

If defendant files a motion for summary judgment claiming that plaintiff failed to exhaust his available administrative remedies as required by 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a), plaintiff should take note of the attached page headed "NOTICE -- WARNING (EXHAUSTION)," which is provided to him as required by *Wyatt v. Terhune*, 315 F.3d 1108, 1120 n. 4 (9th Cir. 2003).

d. If defendant wishes to file a reply brief, he shall do so no later than fifteen days after the opposition is served upon him.

e. The motion shall be deemed submitted as of the date the reply brief is due. No hearing will be held on the motion unless the Court so orders at a later date.

3. All communications by plaintiff with the court must be served on defendant, or defendant's counsel once counsel has been designated, by mailing a true copy of the document to defendants or defendants' counsel.

4. Discovery may be taken in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. No further court order under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(a)(2) is required before the parties may conduct discovery.

5. It is plaintiff's responsibility to prosecute this case. Plaintiff must keep the court informed of any change of address by filing a separate paper with the clerk headed "Notice of Change of Address." He also must comply with the court's orders in a timely fashion. Failure to do so may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: August 5, 2014

JAMES DONATO
United States District Judge

United States District Court
Northern District of California

NOTICE -- WARNING (SUMMARY JUDGMENT)

If defendants move for summary judgment, they are seeking to have your case dismissed. A motion for summary judgment under Rule 56 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure will, if granted, end your case.

Rule 56 tells you what you must do in order to oppose a motion for summary judgment. Generally, summary judgment must be granted when there is no genuine issue of material fact--that is, if there is no real dispute about any fact that would affect the result of your case, the party who asked for summary judgment is entitled to judgment as a matter of law, which will end your case. When a party you are suing makes a motion for summary judgment that is properly supported by declarations (or other sworn testimony), you cannot simply rely on what your complaint says. Instead, you must set out specific facts in declarations, depositions, answers to interrogatories, or authenticated documents, as provided in Rule 56(e), that contradict the facts shown in the defendant's declarations and documents and show that there is a genuine issue of material fact for trial. If you do not submit your own evidence in opposition, summary judgment, if appropriate, may be entered against you. If summary judgment is granted, your case will be dismissed and there will be no trial.

NOTICE -- WARNING (EXHAUSTION)

If defendants file a motion for summary judgment for failure to exhaust, they are seeking to have your case dismissed. If the motion is granted it will end your case.

You have the right to present any evidence you may have which tends to show that you did exhaust your administrative remedies. Such evidence may be in the form of declarations (statements signed under penalty of perjury) or authenticated documents, that is, documents accompanied by a declaration showing where they came from and why they are authentic, or other sworn papers, such as answers to interrogatories or depositions.

If defendants file a motion for summary judgment for failure to exhaust and it is granted, your case will be dismissed and there will be no trial.

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v.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am an employee in the Office of the Clerk, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California.

That on 8/6/2014, I SERVED a true and correct copy(ies) of the attached, by placing said copy(ies) in a postage paid envelope addressed to the person(s) hereinafter listed, by depositing said envelope in the U.S. Mail, or by placing said copy(ies) into an inter-office delivery receptacle located in the Clerk's office.

Darrell Mitchell
Mule Creek State Prison
P.O. Box 409040
Ione, CA 95640

Dated: 8/6/2014

Richard W. Wieking
Clerk, United States District Court

By Lisa R. Clark
LISA R. CLARK, Deputy Clerk to the
Honorable JAMES DONATO